



THE

HUMBLE PETITION,

OF THE

BEGGARS OF IRELAND.

WITH NOTES.

Je ne vous insulte point, dit le vieillard ; je vous parle en
ami, et je paie mon asyle en vous disant la vérité.—*Belisaire.*

LIVERPOOL:

PRINTED BY F. B. WRIGHT, CASTLE-STREET.

1830.

JEREMIAH, xxi, 12.

Thus saith the LORD, Execute judgment in the morning, and deliver him that is spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor, lest my fury go out like fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings.

EZEKIEL, xvi. 49.

Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her, and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy.

PROVERBS, xxix. 14.

The King that faithfully judgeth the poor, his throne shall be established for ever.

339
H 881.

man 28

TO THE
KING'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY,
AND
TO THE LORDS OF GREAT BRITAIN,
AND
TO THE COMMONS.

The Humble Petition of the Beggars of Ireland,

Most Humbly Sheweth,

THAT your petitioners, being in a condition destitute, helpless, and miserable ; without home, friendless, and deprived of every honourable means of support ; of every means of living with honesty, (1) except what may arise from disobeying your laws, and humbling ourselves like dogs in the presence of our fellow men ; not having friends that represent us to your Honours, or misrepresented by such as have reduced us to this base condition, and those who would prevent us from escaping from our ruined state ; deserted or betrayed by our natural protectors, some of whom are unable, even if they are willing, to make amends for the injury they have done to us and our country ; overwhelmed in debt, which we could not avoid incurring, to pawnbrokers, having stripped our bodies to save our lives : scarcely clad or more naked than swine ; in debt to those who, for the wretched cellars or garrets wherein they have given us a shelter, have forced us to surrender the tickets (2) of our clothes or nightly covering, spiritless, debased, cast forth from society, for no offence, or confined in prisons for asking food of our

56043

fellow creatures, to keep us from starving, approach you in the hope, that that sense of justice, which we acknowledge to have frequently dictated your acts, and that compassion, which we have occasionally experienced, will induce you to listen to the expression of our grievances. We know that you are able, we hope that you are willing, to raise us from our base condition.

Your Honours made some inquiry about us on a late occasion ; but you do not now seem to think of us, nor does it appear that the answers given to your inquiries, influenced you to think it expedient to take us under your protection. But may we be permitted to represent to you, that we were not asked to explain our own case to your Honours. You heard something about charity, or the pleasure which some persons take in seeing us cold and naked and famishing, because it gives them, or other persons, occasion to exercise what they call charity. Ah ! just and compassionate Englishmen, look at our pale, thin, starved faces. (for may be they may tell you that we hide our clothes, but it is not likely that we would die for the want of them, if we had them.) If they had a grain of charity in their hearts, do you think they would be content that we remain dependant on their charity ? (3)

If we compare ourselves to those of the natives of Great Britain, who follow the same occupations that we followed in our better days, we see no reason to think, that it is pleasing to the Sovereign Disposer of all things, that they should enjoy the benefit of laws that provide every Englishman who wants them with a home and food and clothing, and that we should be destitute of all. (4) We have worked in your fields, we have lost our health in your manufactories, we have wandered after those who have carried our wealth to you and thereby enriched your artizans and tradesmen : (5) when we could work we did your work well : we have followed our generals, and with them fought your battles, and largely contributed to your wealth and power and

glory. Will you continue to leave us in a condition worse than that of your negroes, worse than that of your dogs and of your swine?

Some of your Honours are of opinion, that the laws made for your own poor are defective, or that they do not sufficiently guaranty the comforts of your poor. There may be defects, and your poor might perhaps be provided for more effectually than at present.(6) But it is not for us to offer suggestions on this subject to your Honours. We approach you as supplicants, reduced to the lowest possible necessity. We ask you for laws that will enable us to live. We ask you for impunity for telling you that we are starving, or much rather we ask you to place us in a condition, wherein being on a level with Englishmen, we may acquiesce in the justice and wisdom of statutes that award an ignominious imprisonment on those who without necessity degrade themselves below the level of men.

We do not ask you to share your wealth with us: but we ask you, by means of the wealth of our country, to render it unnecessary that we should transgress your laws, and trouble you with importunate craving for bread, and wander through your streets, or hide ourselves in your cellars, lest the appearance of our poverty should draw upon us notice and procure us weeks of hard labour in gaol, while our families are to perish for want of the aid which we would gladly obtain for them if we could, by the free use of our limbs and free labour of our bodies.

Need we remind you, that while an English labourer obtains half-a-crown a day, an Irish labourer, when at home, cannot get ten-pence; (7) that the persons who ought to find work and wages for the Irish labourers in Ireland, expend in England the property of the Irish poor, and leaving the Irish manufacturers who cannot travel in pursuit of them, leave their own debts unpaid? The higher manufacturers are bankrupts, and the poor ones perish.

Thus enormous wealth too flows into the purses of the British tradesmen. Yet, though the En-

lish receive all our wandering nobles ; and though such of our gentry as desert that immutable duty which God has imposed upon those who profess his dreadful name, to defend, provide for, and relieve the poor and oppressed, are cherished in Great Britain and encouraged to desert us ; if they, or if the English, whom they enrich by making us poor, are intreated to give a trifling portion of our wealth to a starving Irish beggar, they are allowed by your laws to tear him from his helpless family and send him to a gaol ; where, while they are perhaps dying of sickness and famine, and have none to bring them so much as a drink of water, his emaciated limbs may be racked, or rendered still more emaciated, by hard labour and improper food. On his return he may find them to have been consigned to the boards and last cold home, which, as they are final expenses are not much grudged by an English parish to the Irish sojourner, who in a land called Christian, has been allowed to perish for want.

You are wise and considerate ; and can you think that we have left our country for no cause at all, when we prefer suffering these and still more miseries, and death itself, to a return to it ? When we leave our country, unable to support our families, and to pay the sums demanded to support a religion which we do not believe to be divine, (8) and the rents of our dwellings, (in which, though they are too small for ourselves, we are fain to afford shelter to our cattle and swine ;) sums to be spent among you, that the sons and daughters of those that have spoiled us may adorn and occupy sumptuous houses in your cities, we hope at least to obtain in your employ some portion of what we have lost, by the industrious use of our skill and labour. We sometimes are not entirely frustrated in our hopes ; and have no reason to repent of having deserted our impoverished homes ; but if broken down by unforeseen calamities, we are poor and helpless, sick and naked, in this country, where the stranger that is poor finds that he is indeed a stranger, where not

having been yourselves strangers, you do not think of fulfilling the claims which God has given them on your hospitality, our condition is truly dismal. We ask those, whom we see to have such forms and features and flesh and blood as we have, for mercy, for the honour of God ; we tell them we have nothing to eat ; and they see that we have not enough of clothes, yet they offer us a halfpenny, and that seldom.

They do not clothe us, although many of them are oppressed or overloaded with the fine warm clothing which we have lost our time in making : nor do they often give us covering for the winter nights, although they expensively clothe the dead, and have more laid up in their houses and warehouses, than they can either use or sell. We lie lower down in the earth than their horses and their dead, not only without sufficient covering, but without sufficient straw. If we ask for relief, they tell us to apply to the parish : but they do not reflect that we have no parish : they did not support us ; but they took our tythes. They contribute small sums to purchase us medicines, and physicians advise us to take them when we are starving : (9) but on cold days to walk barefooted through several streets to dispensaries, or to sit or stand for hours in the courts of dispensaries, may counteract the medicines, and thus they may do us no good ; besides that, if we lie sick, and our wives or children are dragged to gaol for making use of the only means left us to live, we are left without messengers to send for our medicines.

They say (10) we are idle ; but they do not give us work. They think we are dirty, and our dwellings infested with vermin ; and they shun us. What can we do ? Your laws have not provided us with houses, and have not even secured us those habitations, which, as we have to share them with our cattle, we cannot possibly preserve clean.(11) Thus we are of necessity habituated to filthiness.

They may think that we are insatiable : we know that they never satisfy us. Would Englishmen be satisfied with less than four meals a

day? how can we be content with four in the week?
(12)

These calamities your poor petitioners endure, and we have endured them for almost two hundred and ninety years; but the English would not endure them: so restitution was made for what was taken from them, and given to be disposed of by a tyrant whom every Englishman at this day abhors.

(13) But we, who, as well as the English poor, lost our property through the public and parliamentary infliction of national vengeance, which plundered the monasteries that gave us support, have received no recompence. We, who feel the dire effects of that righteous vengeance, which divine justice, by means of a merciless government and a too pliant legislature, inflicted; call upon a merciful sovereign, whose counsellors are free men,—on the representatives of a nation, who like to conceal their acts of mercy, (14) and to make an open display of acts which they think just, beseeching you, and conjuring you, if you regard the mercy of God, to do us justice.

You cannot show us mercy adequate to our wants, in our present condition, without constantly making a display of your mercy. Our misery wearies the compassion of our friends, and still presents an undiminished mass. It lies not exposed to your view; (yet you might discover and witness it :) it is under ground that we suffer, and thus we are left to suffer, and remain like the dead. We bless and load with our prayers, those who afford us relief; and are thankful if we get but one meal a day: are they who bereave us thankful for four? We know that we are poor and debased; but we know not that any ought to despise us. We are all descended from one father: have pity on us then and give us laws: if you do not know better, give us the benefit of your own laws till you do, and do not send us back to perish: but afford us (15) the hospitality and support we need, till, through such provision, as to your wisdom shall seem fit, we may

be able to return to our country in the expectation of being received at houses of our own, to which the poor both of England and of Ireland may be equally welcome to resort.

You give habitations to the Africans, whom you have rescued from pirates, and teach them to live in regulated communities. Some of you would deprive the Hindoo widows of the liberty of burning themselves to death. But you leave neglected that which more concerns you. Haste then to rescue a nation of famished and almost naked beggars, and teach us to live in honesty, and like civilized men Deliver us from those that have spoiled us. Purchase from them the green fields of our unhappy country; build us humble villages upon them, (16) and let us repay you with industry and loyalty. Do not continue to repress the feelings of English gentlemen; do not suffer your children to accept of presents—nor suffer them to wear the gold chains and gaudy trinkets, the meed of our chyle and of our heart's blood.—But awake every man of you, at the sighing of the oppressed, and with that strength that renders omnipotent the right hand of human power when moved by justice, save us, save generations to come, from our obscene murderers, or from ignoble destroyers. We forgive them for the sufferings they have caused us to endure; and wish them abundance of such prosperity, as they may enjoy with a good conscience and without disgrace; but you we implore to put an end to our sufferings.

O reflect, and take it to heart, that we are destitute of most of the things, without which human nature repines, and that make men desire to live! that while you have many homes and palaces, and many thousand times more room than you can occupy, we have scarcely a foot of ground whereon to lay our head; that while your heads are laid on downy pillows, surrounded by splendour and secure from external air, we lie exposed to the frost and tempest, and our lodging is upon the cold damp ground; that while you have rivers of wine, and can

bathe yourselves daily in milk, we can seldom taste even such milk as English labourers would reject, and are glad if we can get such as they give to their pigs; that we frequently die when a little wine might save us; (17) for to whom can we apply for wine, when almost all would deny us milk?

Think but on this. And reflect on the fact, that hundreds of your fellow creatures, whom you have the means to make happy, useful, and contented, are, in the midst of abundance and luxury, daily and hourly, perishing through cold and hunger. Make haste then to help us. Begin your acts by delivering England from the guilt, (18) and your poor petitioners from the effects of a great national crime, that has been starving us for ages. Let your first session, (19) oh! let its first act be characterized by righteousness, and kindness to man. Break off your sins by righteousness, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor, and peradventure He who is the sovereign of all sovereigns, and greater than we all, He who is the best friend of the poor, the avenger of the injured and oppressed, will look down upon you and grant a blessing to your subsequent proceedings, and give you prosperity (20) as He has given you glory.

FINIS.

NOTES.

No. 1, page 3, "*with honesty.*"

To live by begging, though base and wicked men of different ranks may have done so, is not, in itself, dishonest. The great poet and moralist of the heathen world, (himself indeed a beggar,) enforces the duties of hospitality and kindness to the poor, by the highest motive then generally received :

For Jove unfolds our hospitable door,
'Tis Jove that sends the stranger and the poor.
Pope, Odys. xiv, 57, 58.

The voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, said: He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none ; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise. Luke, iii, 11. If this and the other divine poor laws were obeyed by christians, all the poor might be comfortably lodged and fed and clothed, with little expense and trouble to individuals. But the wise commands of God which provide for the poor, are disobeyed, and the poor perish. The forerunner of the Messiah was disregarded by those most eminent for their piety. They omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith, Matth. xxiii, 23, and when the Messiah had entered on his ministry, it was found necessary to sanction begging. Give to every man that asketh of thee. Luke, vi, 30 : and in the parable or narrative of our Saviour, concerning the rich man who left the poor man to the care of the dogs, while he himself was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day, the beggar is represented to be in the bosom of Abraham in paradise, or hádes, while the rich man was in torments and in disgrace. Luke, xvi.

But least of all does the profession of an Irish beggar imply in itself the existence of dishonourable or dishonest conduct in the poor beggars. And why? The law which forbids them to beg, took from them the means provided for their support by the ancient superstition of the country : and not only that, but it omits the correcting the propensity which their natural protectors have to wander from their place, by sumptuary enactments, and leaves them without employment.

No. 2, page 3, "*the tickets.*"

When an Irish pauper arrives in an English town, either in quest of employment, or in despair of preserving his life and those of his family, by either the so much talked of charity of the Irish or otherwise ; or when having spent the little sum, perhaps at the utmost from five shillings to a pound, the earnings of many weeks or months of begging, he finds himself and his family counted transgressors in a land, the inhabitants of which, were supposed in Mayo, Longford, or some western county, to be as liberal to the poor, as christians; they are taken into some damp cellar or upper room with broken windows, for God's sake, as the owner says. (For it is on the poor that the great weight falls under the present system, of affording lodging and support out of their own inadequate means, while they themselves are often perishing with want, to the destitute and perishing poor of Ireland, spurned or driven from the houses of the rich.) His family want food ; and then one of their coats or shirts or some article of their scanty clothing must go to be pawned. Thus from six pence to six shillings is raised, and hence they get pleurisy, rheumatism, diarrhoea, or the like. It is seldom these friendless improvident creatures have sense enough to send for medical aid, till a serious illness is secured to them. This sum expended, and the owner of the room being also poor and Irish, some more clothes must be pawned, or some

of the children must go out in the cold to beg, or with matches. A prowling constable, or some magisterial Irus, in spite of the brimstone pass, seizes upon the poor little beggar,* and consigns it to starving and darkness, or to bread and water, in the coal hole. Next morning, being brought before a worthy bench, none of whom ever knew what it was to have an empty stomach, he receives the sentence to him incomprehensible, of three weeks imprisonment as a beggar and a vagabond. Meantime the father, perhaps a strong labourer, who could have earned a guinea a week if all had been right, dies ; and soon after the mother, one of those thin beggar women, that are so common and so troublesome, of whom, an absentee Irish lady of quality, who, though she may distribute bibles, seldom reads them and never fasts, would make two, lies down and dies also, and it may be hoped, is admitted to a place, whence poor beggar women are not allowed to go on errands for ladies in the coal hole, no not even for a drop of water to cool their tongues ; or for a year longer protracts her own and her childrens' lives, by, perhaps from a penny to six pence a day, gained by selling eggs, or making matches, or begging ; till inanition and cold and nakedness and sorrow lay them all low, and add to the list of victims to the modern Moloch—the god of avarice, cruelty and pride, who dwells in temples made with hands, who pampers the rich, and robs and starves the poor.

But what an imperfect description is this of the multifarious misery, which these patient victims are constantly suffering.

No. 3, page 4, “ *their charity.*”

I appeal to parish officers in the English towns, whether these miserable people do not often prefer certain death by cold and hunger, to the being sent

See Appendix,

back to Ireland. And what great wonder! Is it likely, that being almost naked, and unable to redeem their clothes and other things, their families scattered in different parts of the country, in quest of employment, some in gaols for begging, and some in fever hospitals; and without the means of travelling beyond the Irish port where they should be landed, they should chuse to be sent to a country where they can get no employment, and where misery still more accumulated by the transfer of its wealth, renders it vain to expect, that the liberality of individuals will make any thing like amends for the defect in parochial laws, even though spurred occasionally by fear of legislatorial interference; even though it were excited by the vain hope of bribing God, which may fairly be supposed to influence such as would dissuade our legislators from abolishing the popish trade in alms. It is a common thing in Ireland, for beggars to ask alms, not only for the love and honour of God and of the Virgin Mary, but also for their intercession for the souls of departed relatives. It appears not to me unlikely, that such squalid hypocrites (see Matth. vi. 5,) at the corners of the streets, or along the walls near chapels, where, on Sundays and holidays, old women and other beggars, especially women with litters of children, station themselves at convenient intervals to collect catholic charity, think their intercessions equivalent to the donations offered by the rich as an apology for disobedience to the laws of the Gospel, or foolishly hoping to make an atonement for their sins, according to the ancient, but most ungodly doctrine, taught by some of the Jewish books reckoned canonical by the church of Rome. See Tobit, iv, 11. Such charity is not the love spoken of in the New Testament: for that seeketh not its own. See 1 Cor. xiii. 15.

People have very confused notions which they express by the term charity; as appears from the talk of the beggars; sometimes they are "*objects of charity*;" sometimes they are "*acts of charity*;"

and a little starved creature will say, she is "the biggest charity you ever saw. Truly this cant should be abolished ; it is a disgrace to the Irish nation.

No. 4, page 4, "*destitute of all.*"

Is it not notorious, that the great mass of poverty in the manufacturing districts, is among the Irish ; who, when turned out of work, have no provision nor parishes to apply to ; and so must either perish through poverty, or be a heavy burthen to the inhabitants of English parishes ? To me it appears not unlikely, that they who think that the poor laws of England are not adequate, do not sufficiently consider, how much this is owing to the influx of Irish, in consequence of the want of poor laws in Ireland.

If the English beg, they have something particular to ask for : some aliment necessary for them, when ill, some article of apparel, a little wine, or the like. And when they get them, they are thankful or satisfied. But if you ask Irish beggars, what they want ? they answer : any thing your Honours please. They are destitute of almost every thing they ought to have.

One very bad feature in the English system of poor laws, is that whereby a married woman is made solely chargeable to her husband's place of residence or parish. In this way, if an English woman has married an Irishman, when he dies, leaving a family who had entirely depended on his exertions, or is deprived of the means of supporting them, they immediately become beggars without resource.

No. 5, page 4, "*tradesmen.*"

It may be said, and I have heard as much, that the encouragement of the importation of Irish property, is necessary for the encouragement or support of the artizans and tradespeople of London,

and that if the rich Irish did not transfer what should be the wages of Irish labourers, to the goldsmiths, &c. of London, these artisans would want employment, or would be as poor as the Irish are now. This sentiment is in itself most iniquitous. What else does it import, but that the Irish peasants are to be starved to death, lest the poor rates of the British Metropolis should be raised.

So the interests of the poor of Norway were sacrificed to the enrichment of the Danish capital : but Providence, whose eyes are throughout the earth, beheld the injustice and rent the kingdom from Denmark.

No. 6, page 5, "*at present.*"

I do not pretend to argue here on common grounds, against the policy, or expediency, or wisdom in a worldly sense of the parochial provision for the poor being such as to deter them from accepting of it, if they can avoid it, although I am well aware of its tendency to increase the number of beggars : but disdaining to rest on any lower ground, than what the word of God warrants me to assume, in addressing such as are called Christians, (and it is not my part, to tell any that say they believe in Jesus, as all our legislators, and most of those for whom they make laws do, that they affirm that they believe what they do not believe ; I leave that to their own conscience before God :) and finding that the foundation of God has this seal : Let every one that nameth the name of Christ, depart from iniquity. 2 Tim. ii. 19. I am bold to assert in the presence of God and before all men ; that the provision made for the English poor, is not what the law of Christ requires. It is not of that openhearted, liberal kind, which, among those who profess his name, should be the consequence of a conscientious, faithful observance of that command of the Lord Jesus, which, even a Jew of the synagogue has lately called divine : All things, whatsoever ye

would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them. Matth. vii. 12. The rich do not sufficiently consider, that the poor have just such feelings and constitutions as they have ; that if they were forced to subsist or pine away on the diet of a workhouse, and to submit to the confinement too often connected with it, they would be discontented, or even miserable, as well as their poor, but “dearly beloved brethren ;” for whom they ought to lay down, not merely their possessions, but their lives. see 1 John, iii. 16: and especially if their only alternatives were, to be allowed two shillings a week, or punished in case they begged for more, or chased through the streets, for asking for what is necessary to support life : if they were not allowed the daily moderate use of agreeable, or cordial beverages, such as of tea, or coffee, or malt, or even sometimes wine, household spices, and vinegar ; which they who can use them when they please, do not perceive the inconvenience of wanting ; but,

Queis humana sibi doleat natura negatis :

yet

not only are such things denied in poor houses, to the great number of the inmates, they are even forbid to take any spirits or wine that might be brought them, that I may say nothing of the cruelty of separating poor families from their dying relatives, the hardship of mothers being deprived of their infants, &c. But truly all this, though it may save present expense and trouble to overseers, cannot claim liberal blessing from God ; and it is this that maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it. Prov. x. 22. For the word of God, which abideth for ever, and his promise, which soars above human calculation, gives this assurance to his ancient people : (and the Apostle instructs us, 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17, that every scripture that is divinely inspired, is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness ; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.) Loose those whom thou hast unjustly bound ; undo

the heavy burdens ; let the oppressed go free ; break every yoke ; deal thy bread to the hungry ; bring the poor that are cast out, to thy house ; when thou seest the naked, cover him ; and hide not thyself from thine own flesh. Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily ; and thy righteousness shall go before thee, and the glory of the Lord shall be thy rereward. Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer thee ; thou shalt cry, and he shall say : Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity. And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul ; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon day : and the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and strengthen thy bones : and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not. And through thee shall be built the old waste places : thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations ; and thou shalt be called The Repairer of the breach, The Restorer of paths to dwell in. Isaiah, lviii. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12.

No. 7. page 5 . "*ten pence.*"

Or five pence. Is there any thing less severe than the torments in the abode of spirits, which infallible testimony assures us, await the unmerciful and unjust, that can convince those whom neither reason nor revelation convince of the injustice of the poor, but strong, or strongly built Irish labourers having to work for five pence a day, while the English man, for the same or less work, receives more than five times as much ?

Is it not such things, that drive the poor Irish to desperation and to acts of violence—and that bespeak many victims to divine indignation, who like the rich man in the narrative or parable, even with the consent of Abraham, are intensely tormented in

hâdes while the poor of this world are comforted ?
Luke xvi. 14, to the end.

Behold, the hire of the labourers, which have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. James v. 4.

No. 8, page 6, "*to be divine.*"

There are two great evils existing in Ireland: and till they are removed, no government in my humble opinion, can reasonably expect, that Ireland will be tranquil, or be the scene of that happiness to which the natural disposition of its inhabitants would adapt it. They are such as cry to heaven, and demand immediate redress from human justice and mercy.

One is the utterly destitute state of the poor; in which they were left at the union with England.

The other is an abuse of power, so repugnant to right reason, that it requires no revelation or particular divine precept, to mark its unrighteousness. I mean the compelling the Roman Catholics, besides what they have to pay the ministers of their own superstition, to pay for another superstition, which they do not believe to be divine. A small number, chiefly of the higher orders, are addicted to that religion, which they think best promotes their worldly interests. If they think their religion worthy of such expensive officers, and if they think its doctrines so comfortable, let them pay for their own comforts.

The great teacher appointed by God, the great king who came in disguise, brought good tidings to the poor and preached them gratis. The teachers commissioned by him followed his example; and the joyful message: that God had been in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, was spread through the civilized world by these poor and despised messengers. This message still remains preserved by divine providence.

in spite of the frauds of creed-makers or other spoilers of the truth, in the genuine parts of the New Testament. But it is eclipsed and obscured in some of the modern versions, and especially through means of a false tale of a Jewish false prophet, announcing to us prodigiously wonderful things, as if shown to him by angels, but things that plunge human hearts in dismay or strike them with horror. This miserable compilation has, in spite of the judgment of honest and learned writers in the early times of christianity, been palmed upon the so called christian world by the bishops of both the Eastern and Western Churches, as a work of an Apostle of Christ; and being the only portion of the Bible, that gives any plausible support to episcopacy, has continued, in spite of the judgment of some of the best qualified writers in the 16th century, for upwards of two centuries, to be published as a portion of the Holy Scriptures, in the Protestant Bibles. Thus, the father of his creatures, whose tender mercies are over all his works, who so loved the world, that he gave his only genuine Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life, is represented as an enemy to man, and the patient and forgiving lamb of God, which took away the sin of the world; John i. 29, 36, who came not to judge the world, but to save the world; John xii. 47, is represented as a cruel, ruthless idol called a lamb with seven horns and seven eyes, and the judaizing christians are called upon to rise up against the powers that be, to avenge themselves, and to render their enemies evil for evil.

Such doctrines, however they may be relished by rebellious, evil disposed spirits in our time, are disapproved of by such as have the spirit of Christ, who are commanded to be subject to the higher powers, and to render to no man evil for evil. Romans, xiii. 1, xii. 17.

Such a pill requires to be gilt. But here there is terror rather than comfort for the poor, although their comforts go to pay for the gilding. The testi-

mony of Christ requires no gilding : but while it offers freely, true, durable riches and righteousness to the poor and to the rich who receive it as beggars, casts contempt on all worldly riches, and honour, and grandeur, and announces to Kings and other worldly rulers, that while it requires its subjects to be faithful friends to them, such of them as profess themselves the subjects of Christ, have not while members of his assembly, any advantage or authority therein, on account of their worldly station ; Christ having said : The kings of the gentiles exercise lordship over them : and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. BUT YE SHALL NOT BE SO ; BUT HE THAT IS GREATEST AMONG YOU LET HIM BE AS THE YOUNGER ; AND HE THAT IS CHIEF AS HE THAT DOTHSERVE. Luke xxii. 25, 26.

Our rulers should find out for themselves, the true way to serve God, instead of continuing to impose that system of human inventions, called the established church, upon the poor Roman Catholics. They should examine themselves, whether there really is any attribute, common to that gorgeous, expensive thing, and the ecclesia (congregation, or assembly) of Christ, which they read of in the New Testament. The question requires no great study, but may be decided in a few hours. They should themselves cease to hear the instruction, that causeth to err from the words of knowledge : and simply furnish the poor of Ireland with the means of making a similar inquest individually : but not allow them to be forced to support a modern system of falsehood, which takes the name of Christ and tramples on his laws. I speak as to English gentlemen, who lay claim to the characteristics of nobleness and sincerity. I speak as to wise men ; whom it is lamentable to see labouring under error.

I have often thought, what a great blessing it might be to the land, if such an institution as that of the Synagogues of Judea, which though they were not of divine appointment, Christ disdained not to

visit, were happily to supercede ecclesiastical establishments : not the modern Synagogues, where men meet to pray and sing, or listen to the singing of a Chassan, nor^t yet the Vitringal Synagogues : but assemblies where all sects, or all who believe in the N. T. Scriptures, might meet to be instructed from or concerning the Scriptures, or exhorted to good works : in which the various sects of Trinitarians, and the believers in but one God, learned and unlearned, Pharisees and Sadducees, Catholics and Protestants, should meet to learn as children, rather than offer the sacrifice of fools.

Nor do I think there would be insuperable difficulty in the way of such a change taking place even immediately. The bishops might be created temporal peers, and they and their clergy made comfortable for life by life pensions.

All the offices of the Synagogues might be performed gratuitously, like the gratuitous Magistracy of England. So christians, or so called christians of all sects might listen to the word of God in society, without meeting to use vain repetitions as the heathen did, as is now done in churches,—but as Christ has forbidden to do. *Matth. vi. 7.* Is it not quite anti-christian to stand praying in such assemblies? See *Matth. vi. 8.* Let men pray in their chambers, as Christ has recommended. *ver. 6.*

Thus, without offending any God, or injuring any man, an honest and an ample fund might gradually arise for the fulfilment of the promise made by King Henry the VIII to the nation, when he cheated the Parliament, and robbed the poor of the hospitals and monasteries : *magnam curam adhibiturum se promisit, ut ad Dei gloriam, bonumque publicum ea disponderentur.* This he said, not that he cared for the glory of God, or the public good ; but because he was a thief and had the bag, and kept what was put therein, or gave it to his bishops and nobles.

It must be admitted, I think, that this would be more sensible, than certain old-fashioned customs, which some of us might have learned in our youth

in some of the seats of knowledge : e. g. that of praying, *propria persôna*, to the Arian God, in the meeting house, while performing righteousness by proxy, *e cathedra*, at his Graces elbow, to the Trinity.

In such Synagogues Elias when he comes might teach : but sure I am, that neither Elias, nor Christ, nor Paul, would ever go to church.

In Christ's congregations or assemblies, all are to speak the same thing, and to be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. See 1 Cor. i. 10. But only he can form such assemblies ; nor has he authorized any man to imitate his work. The most perfect imitations are at best but idolatrous.

No. 9, page 7, "*starving*."

I know of a surgeon's having put an issue in a half starved beggar's leg, to remove the pain of cold. Afterwards the man got drawers and stockings, and regained flesh and dispensed with the issue. How often is medicine given when quite useless, through want of food and clothing.

Such physicians and surgeons as are in the painful habit of visiting these people, know the difficulties to be great, that attend the administering of medical aid to them, by reason of the utter want of proper attendance and conveniences in their hovels ; and they must find it a most disagreeable employment on this account, as well as of the dirt and vermin.

Even in the public institutions, physicians or surgeons, I am persuaded, are considerably counteracted by niggardly and inadequate supplies as to diet and especially wine. I am persuaded that many poor persons die, or are much injured, in some of the institutions in Liverpool in consequence of this.

It is an ill sign of the growing prosperity of a town, when the poor rates are diminished, by withholding from the poor what would prolong their

lives, to say nothing of making them comfortable and grateful.

No. 10, page 7, "*They say we are idle.*"

So Pharaoh said to the Israelites : Ye are idle, ye are idle. Exod. v. 17. How often do hypocrisy and idleness and covetousness suggest such an objection or excuse, when a poor beggar happens to apply for relief.

No. 11, page 7, "*clean,*"

Viz. in the provinces : yet occasionally in towns. I saw a nest of Irish paupers in an English town, where there was also a sow belonging to the owner of the place. None of them were comfortable except the sow ; who occupied a good corner, and had a tolerably decent bed (for an Irish sow.) What wonder if an infliction similar to one of the plagues of Egypt should come upon the land, since the laws continue to sanction by their silence, the singular good taste of Munster peers, (and mere Union peers too !) for the maceration of peasants, and (as becomes those genuine disciples of Saint Patrick) for the encouraging of the propagation of bugs and lice !

I see no reason to believe, that, if Irish peasants had the same advantages as English, they would not be quite as cleanly in their habits. But it is quite absurd to expect an improvement in respect to cleanliness, till the poor are allowed room to budge. How can poor creatures keep themselves clean, who have no habitations but such as have for many years been inhabited by undisturbed families of bugs ? who are crowded by tens or twenties, in apartments consisting of one or two small rooms, dying, dead, bringing forth and being born, and sick, men women and children together, packed six and seven in a bed, like bottles in a bin, or rather on a layer of straw, covered with a beggar woman's cloak, or a dirty blanket, without a sheet ? Moreover how can

their moral condition be improved, while all sorts are left to associate together?

In truth the want of cleanliness, which by some is thought peculiar to the Irish paupers, ought to be ascribed to their poverty and the neglect with which they are treated, and especially to the want of clean clothing, more particularly linen and cotton. But the Irish talk of their linen trade being unprosperous. If so, they may take it as an admonition from divine providence, to supply their poor with change of linen.

In the public institutions, both in England and Ireland, much attention is paid to decency in this respect: and so far they are right: but they are not right in keeping up decency, by excluding shirtless paupers.

In some of the numerous institutions (the old ones) in Dublin, much care, I allow, is bestowed on the inmates. But in these, respect is, I fear, too much had to decency of appearance, in admitting persons; and perhaps a well dressed harlot, or some one who can bring a note from a gentleman or a lady, might be more readily received into a charitable hospital or other establishment, than a poor dirty beggar woman, who has no recommendation, but that of her misery, and a family of children who are all her own, and who has neither inducement nor ability to keep herself clean. I once asked a surgeon of an hospital, that has received large sums from parliament, to take a poor woman in: but he made the inquiry whether she could keep herself decent, as otherwise the rest of the patients (some of them perhaps, whores :) might be discontented. I knew nothing of her, except that she had a bad ulcer on her leg, and was very dirty and almost naked. Now however such a question might harmonize with the expression of Irish charity, I maintain, that, if such is the nature of Irish charity, that it respects the superior clothing, decency and the like of its objects, the poor of Ireland ought immediately to be provided for at the public expense. It is just the dirty,

lousy beggars, that cet. par. ought to be provided for first, and for this simple reason, that they want it most. It is such that should have houses provided for them, where they could have food of such quality as might induce them to accept of it: food sufficiently good for human creatures: to which they should have a right to resort, as the paupers in England have to the parish, and even be compelled (kindly) to resort to them, and washed and shaved, and made to experience the comforts of decency; (but not, as in the mendicity institutions, and some others, saginated with potatoes and candle-grease, or meal and mouse dirt, or potatoes and — I know not what,) and taught to transmit them to their children, to prevent the increase of filthiness and vermin, and that the race might be improved: not left, as St. Patrick and “our church” have left them, to solace themselves in their hopeless condition, by killing vermin by the permission of the national Saint, at the steps of charitable gentlemen.

It is said indeed, that in the mendicity they get quantities to eat; mostly consisting of potatoes, (very good to be sure,) and greasy materials brought from various sources in vessels like house-buckets. But what may these materials consist of? I do not know. Do they who prepare them? Since they consist of every ones leavings, may they not contain pieces of bread and butter impressed with the teeth of gentlemen who have the venereal disease, or the like? God knows I would not taste their food, and if they who prepare the food thus collected, were under the influence of that precept: thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, this food would not be thus unmannerly served up to the poor. Even the heathen satirist says,

Stultus et prodigus donat quod spernit et odit.

But is this a fit expression of their christian charity? Is this dealing out their bread to the hungry, and satisfying every afflicted soul? Such charity it

is, that according to their own orthodoxy, is followed in the next life, by damnation. But according to the testimony of Jesus, and the genuine scriptures of God, is succeeded by torments and disgrace, for an undefined portion of duration in the abode of spirits. Luke xvii.

But at the mendicity place, the poor, it is said, get no clothes, nor blankets; and as to sheets—To think of such things for beggars!—But beggar women have most exquisitely contrived skins, formed by the hand of God, as well as the ladies, who get themselves invited to the castle, or sweat in conventicles or churches, or ball rooms, and afford at their own expense or at that of their husbands creditors, to keep gigs and jaunting cars, and scold five or six servants on low wages and neither beer nor whiskey, human labour being cheap;—and use two dozen gowns, &c., and keep a town house and a country house, while a dozen of poor people, with four pairs of shoes among them! inhabit one apartment in the liberty, at the expense of beggars swarming like mice, the poor being employed by God to afford shelter to the poor:—since the higher orders will not do it,—and say to the starving poor, I have nothing to give you, go to the mendicity, and eat what we and our dogs or our ill taught children leave.

However the poor of the mendicity say that they are miserable, and the beggars in England, are about as unwilling to be sent to these hospitable retreats, as the beggars of Ithaca were, to be sent to king Echetus.

So it will be, where there are no laws for the poor.

No. 12, page 8, "*in the week.*"

We are told of late, that the evils of Ireland are to be ascribed to the rapid increase of population in that country, and that since the population proceeds to increase in a ratio greater than that of the means by which they subsist, unless population is

checked, the inhabitants of the earth must in time be deprived of food. But notwithstanding the theories of heathenish philosophers, (whose wisdom after all, is of the same kind as that which led king Pharaoh to murder the infants of the children of Israel,) the Omniscient Creator of the world has provided more than superabundantly for all the creatures that he has created, and that he intends to create, but especially for the inhabitants of Ireland. This provision is made in two ways ; in the first place, by supplying more than enough for all both rich and poor : secondly, by his word ; (for man liveth not by bread only, but by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God :) by which word he has commanded all that have this world's goods, to attend to and to supply the wants of the poor, not to waste his gifts in ebriety and gluttony.

What then is the reason that the poor of Ireland are so miserable ? because the commands of the Supreme Sovereign, to whom we owe every thing we have, are almost entirely disregarded. The rich give to the rich, and oppress the poor, to increase their substance.

Christ has given no command to heap extravagant wealth on the rich, on those from whom a return is to be expected. Luke vi. 33. But he has commanded his disciples to attend to the wants of the destitute and weak, and guilty : according to the example of God, who is kind to the ungrateful and evil ; who maketh his sun to rise upon evil men and good men, and raineth on just and on unjust. Matth. v. 43—48. Luke vi. 31—36. And to one who had invited him he said : When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, nor thy kinsmen, nor rich neighbours ; lest they also invite thee again, and a recompence be made thee. But when thou makest an entertainment, call poor, maimed, lame, blind : and thou shalt be blessed ; because they cannot recompense thee : for thou shalt be recompensed in the resurrection of the just. Luke xiv. 12, 13, 14. (So we see that, to christian

missionaries, services of gold and silver are useless trumpery.)

They then, that withhold necessary support from the needy, and either hoard up, or expend on the rich, what God has intrusted them with for the poor, are justly said to rob God, and thus their blessings are cursed. Though the rich invite to their feasts, their rich neighbours, their friends, their brethren and their kinsmen, and in doing so, give themselves a great deal of unnecessary trouble, and little or no satisfaction to any one, they often refuse to give the poor any thing : whereas if every christian and person called christian were to pay even so much regard to the commands of Christ, as to give the value of a potatoe and a glass of water to every pauper that should ask, the poor might be amply provided for and at little expence ; and the appalling distresses of the poor might vanish as a cloud.

It is true the commands of Christ are not issued among thunderings and lightnings from Sinai. His will is expressed in the epistles of his friends, and in his own familiar discourses:—the conversations of him who is before Abraham was : who conversed with Abraham and his family as a friend : him who spake as never man spake. But these express his will sufficiently ; and it is exceeding great folly for any, even the highest upon earth, to neglect the expressed will of so great a Potentate, because though he could compel us to obey, he rather invites and entreats as a friend, enforcing his entreaties by his example. But if his gentle hints are despised, he can moreover, in case they are requisite, and we prefer them, further enforce them by dreadful blows.

He indeed defended the woman who anointed his feet with a costly ointment, against the churlish censure of some of his disciples. But it was his feet that she anointed,—the feet of him who brought good tidings gratis : not the feet of such as assume his name, while they despise his example and disobey his commands. It was with the poor that he associated during his life : the pious put him to death,

and the rich gave him a grave. Though of the highest family in Israel, of the highest family on earth, he seldom visited the houses of the rich or great. Besides: the ointment was her own: she had not procured it, by robbing and cheating the poor.

People that are rich, and have high characters for piety, mean perhaps well, in speaking against the drunkenness, into which poor people are occasionally said to fall. But do they ever consider, that they themselves, with their rich and pious friends, frequently consume in one sitting, more than what would frequently intoxicate more than equal numbers of such, as, like the Irish poor, and many of the poor of England, scarcely ever taste wine or any strong drink. If the poor, by reason of the voracity of the rich, or of such as can live on credit, who seldom spare to give what they can afford, to please their high acquaintances or to pamper themselves, keep up the price of whatever is good, so that the poor cannot have the daily moderate use of what the providence of God has given, to cheer the heart of man in general, what wonder, if the poor should occasionally be inebriated, since some of them can only bear a little, and yet, very naturally, take as much as they can, whenever it happens to fall in their way.

And so it is with regard to food. Does not every one know, that through some fault or other, most of those things that are indicated as most proper for the poor's digestion, are kept up at such a high price, that the poor, who want them most, must do without them. The Irish poor endeavour to live occasionally on starch flummery, or even sea weeds: while the higher orders and their domestic animals consume more flesh—much more than would suffice for all: and much of what they eat is lost, as would appear evidently, by an examination of the bills of apothecaries, and analysis of the crapula hodierna and hesterna of Munster Earls.—Vulgar stuff! No, for I am not speaking of the poor. Yet their solid or liquid contents are thought of more considerable

value : at least, they are sold, in some of the English towns, to pay for their expenses.

How often have I heard pious people ascribe intoxication falsely to the poor ! How often are they said to be reeling drunk, when afflicted and drunken, but not with strong drink, when their knees are weak with famine and weariness, and their minds distracted and harrassed by watching and cold and anxiety.

A lady when drunk, spoke to me once, against the propensity that some poor person had, or was surmised to have, for taking drams.

Truly such people, whether they be pious or impious, should just study to mind their own business, and should recollect the story of the high priest Eli, how he unjustly ascribed that atrocious sin to the afflicted mother of the young prophet appointed afterwards to announce to him the ruin of his house and of his priesthood. He should have spared his admonitions, and attended to the failings of his beastly sons. See 1 Sam. i. ii.

The poor, who thank God for all they can get, may reasonably be supposed to know what agrees with their own constitutions, as well as the rich and the pious, who say or listen to many prayers and thanksgivings, and never thank God for any thing. They perhaps have experienced in themselves certain outward phenomena to be the effects of what their conscience disallows, and then with no philosophic minds, or understandings furnished with much power of abstracting, to presume, in common life, as if to follow that rule in philosophizing : that of many effects of the same kind, the same causes are to be assigned as much as may be. It is the common cant among the higher sorts of Irish.

No doubt it is the will of God, that there should be various orders of high and low, rich and poor on the earth : but is not his will, that there should be such great disproportion as to the use of the good things which he has given. And how ? His word appoints the rich stewards of their substance for the poor, till these have enough, and has invited them

to make the poor their guests ; promising to those who obey him, blessings, to which all their transitory wealth and honours are not to be compared.

We have heard a great deal of late, about the luxurious habits of beggars in London, especially the Irish : and very likely many individuals of superior ingenuity may find the way to thrive in such a large and opulent town, in that vile profession as well as in others. But is this an argument against the poor simple peasantry of Ireland, why they should be left to starve at the bottom of such a profession? Is it not rather a cogent argument, why an universal system for employment of the poor, and of maintaining them in their proper places, being enacted, their present vile profession may retain no excuse?

I know that great dislike has been expressed, or entertained in Ireland, to the notion of enacting parochial laws for the poor. And I am willing to hope that this dislike does not always proceed from covetousness, and that many who express such aversion, have not seriously considered the subject : for I know not what reasonable objection, honest and just men have against it. A just and wise system of poor laws, might not only, by laying reasonable proportions on all, make the support of the poor tolerable, or even agreeable to each, but might have the effect of sumptuary laws, to prevent the useless expending abroad too great a proportion of the amount of the rents of the country. It would argue the absence of sentiments that are just, in the rest of the richer portion of the inhabitants of Dublin for instance, to be willing to take advantage, of the exuberant kindness, patience and liberality of two or three, or a few extraordinarily rich gentlemen, (if there really are any who possess these requisite virtues,) and to overwhelm them with the waves of human misery, which, if it had liberty allowed it to discover itself, would doubtless make exertion for the protracting of human life, and pour in upon them, from the thronged recesses, alleys; cellars, or sties in the liberties of that splendid capi-

tal, laying such a claim on each of them (which certainly ought not to be eluded, and must be allowed) to an exertion of christian beneficence, which would soon require the sacrifice of every luxury, and almost every convenience and comfort of their lives, and after all perhaps make but a trifling diminution of the mass of wretchedness, that has accumulated for many years, or for centuries, through the atrocious guilt of Irish legislators, the general deficient sense of moral obligation, and dearth of real efficacious charity.

I would not however, that the English parochial laws were without modification, introduced into Ireland. At least if they were, the Government should see that they were made effectual, for the happiness and improvement of the poor.

We see from the reports of the Dublin mendicity Society, with what immense difficulties the exertions of a few individuals, extort from the world's cold charity, the paltry donations, by which a great number, but a small proportion of the starved beggars have their lives protracted in misery, and want of almost every thing that makes life agreeable. I know not, whether the people of Dublin are deaf to the pious exhortations addressed to them, wherein it is calculated, that by contributing a few shillings to the mendicity Society, they may keep alive such of the poor as know that there is such a place as Dublin, in misery and want, at the same time that they ward off the infliction of an adequate legal provision for thousands or tens of thousands of the provincials, especially of Connaught, living, or hereafter to live, under ground in England, in miserable dark holes, like rats and mice, who know nothing of Dublin or of its charitable institutions, and like the starved and satirical horse that committed suicide in the Ribble, chuse rather to perish where they are, than take the trouble of returning to perish at home, —whether they have good sense enough to see or to feel, that no such exhortations can flow from genuine benevolence, and that no private exertions can

be of adequate avail, as long as want of law permits the idle, dissolute nobility and gentry to spend in foreign countries or in vicious extravagance, all the wealth that should enable them to make the peasantry of Ireland joyful and contented;—but the tardiness and inadequacy of their contributions speak, as if by the incitement that gave a voice to the ass of Balaam, reproving the tardiness of the government and legislature.

It is for desultory peers, who enjoy the riches that formerly were spent upon the poor; it is for the bloated and superabundantly rich devourers of the good things of the land, to fancy it for their interest to have the citizens persuaded that poor laws would be a burden. They, who in case of poor laws being made universal, might reasonably be made to contribute annually their hundreds and thousands towards the support and employment of their neglected tenantry, are now at liberty to throw their burden, their intolerable burdens, on the poor, or on such of the industrious and affluent as are conscientious; and to cant about the charity and benevolence of Ireland, while they themselves neglect the most indispensable of their duties, and, as is pretty generally admitted, leave the population of the country, which they insolently call redundant, to famine, cold, and nakedness, in the midst of the abundant provision of all that is good, which the hand of God daily bestows:

While the good bishop, with a meeker air,
Admits, and leaves them,—providence's care.

No. 13, page 8, "*every Englishman at this day abhors.*"

Godwin, (Francis) a bishop of Hereford, in the reign of Charles I, after mentioning the act of Parliament, whereby all the hospitals, and houses for poor travellers and strangers, in the whole kingdom

&c., were given up to King Henry VIII, ut iis pro suo arbitrio uteretur, adds : Ac iis quidem ordinibus gratias agens, magnam curam adhibiturum se promisit, ut ad Dei gloriam, bonumque publicum ea disponerentur. Cæterum promissorum fidem nondum exolutam videmus. Annal. lib. i. Anno. 1545. He says in another place : Adeoque si rex post tantos sumptus egere coeperit, mirandum non putarem, nisi ex coenobiorum nuper eversorum spoliis opum vim incredibilem congestisse verisimile esset. At ille nihilominus exhausto plane fisco, rei nummariæ inopia magnopere laboravit ; sive quod Deo erepta Dei benedictionem secum non adferrent, quæ sola (ut Salomon) divites facit : sive quod partem longe maximam in alios, procures puta et aulicos suos (the ancestors of those who expend the poor's sustenance so as to leave the poor of Ireland to perish, because there is no law for the poor :) contulisset sive denique quod ex iis quæ sibi reservarat magna stipendia ejectis monachis persolvenda erant quamdiu viverent. Quibus adjiciendum est, quod Episcopatus novos sex constituerat, et Ecclesias Cathedrales tetidem. Five of them remain, like Jeroboam's calves, or like the high places and groves of the house of Ahab, a disgrace to the nation, or a monument of iniquity.

No. 14, page 8, "*to conceal their acts of mercy.*"

Whether the command, Matth. vi. 3. When thou doest an alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth ; is understood aright by people in general, or whether they are much influenced by it, we cannot affirm, but we may suppose, judging from the great mass of misery constantly existing in the neighbourhood of the rich, both in England and Ireland, that there is no such great need now of an affectation of concealment in almsgiving. The command was given in a country, where the law of God was respected ; where obedience to the law of God, and especially acts of kindness to the poor,

were so much honoured by men in general, that the vanity of pharisees and devotees in general, was tempted to display itself that way: where the law of God, which liberally provides for the outcast, the stranger, the fatherless and widow, and the poor of all descriptions, was the law of the land: not among those whose laws and habits are, in regard to the poor and afflicted wanderers, opposed to the laws both of Moses and Christ,

I suppose that the command of Christ respects the motive; as he says: Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, *to be seen of them*. Else is it not quite notorious, and a matter that cannot be dissembled, that in case of the task of keeping life in the Irish beggars, (for little more can we do for them under the present system,) being left to the mercy of two or three christians, it must occasionally be necessary to dispense with the obedience due to this precept; as David did in regard to the shew-bread.

No. 15, page 8, "*afford us*."

In houses of your own: (See Isaiah lviii. 7.)

No. 16, page 9, "*villages upon them*."

The Irish when in the greatest extremity of poverty, can with difficulty be persuaded to resort to the parish work-house. They answer; "Sure I would not be alive in it for a week." The confinement is irksome, and the diet, and total want of wine or cordials, not exactly most proper for starved constitutions: they have occasionally told me that they could not use it; and subsisted on a little tea or coffee and sugar, given them when they went, such things not being allowed, even in these days, when Providence gives them so cheap. They cannot live, when brought very low without something of the kind, tea being to poor Irish the substitute for cordial. They also have complained much

of having to put up with food, such as fish-scouse, a mixture that gives them the bowel complaint. The coarsest bread of all too, is perhaps not so well suited to half starved beggars, as to rich and pampered gluttons, if we would only consider the affair rationally. To live in a workhouse, inasmuch as it is a kind of prison, is like a punishment: but why should people be punished for being poor, or for being idle when there is no employment for them? They have been also fearful of being forced to go back to Ireland, leaving their families in England and their clothes in pawn shops.

The poor of Ireland require to be treated as ignorant children, and instructed how to live. They should have schools wherein to learn household employments, cleanliness, &c. and cottages near to each other furnished with the common useful articles, under the constant oversight of everlasting committees of all the fit persons that are left in Ireland: who should visit them at various hours and unexpectedly. Indeed I would have two or three beggars on the committee; as it is the poor who are concerned.

Each village might have its school or *synagogue*, to which all both young and old should be invited, if not absolutely compelled, to resort on proper occasions, to hear the genuine parts of the New Testament, and some parts of the Old: but no churches nor chapels. Also a public table, and other common occasions for forming them to social instead of gregarious habits, and training them to regular, industrious, frugal dispositions; that so the poor might be useful members of society and loyal subjects, and Ireland might no longer be the depository of God's curse, or a fruitful land be as bad as a desert, through the wickedness of them that dwell therein, or through the folly and rapacity of the great.

But where are the funds to come from? some may say. How were funds supplied, when profligate

ministers were disposed to set their continental neighbours against each other, and deluge Europe with blood? By a tax upon income. If the wealthy landlords neglect their property, let them too be made subject to salutary tutelage, and a part at least of their substance be secured and appropriated to the purpose for which God has designed it, and the nature of society indicates it. What is there to prevent the legislature from levying a poors tax on the income of Ireland, and thus preserving what ought to support, comfortably to support the ingenious and laborious, or the helpless part of the inhabitants, from being spent on foreign strumpets and vicious extravagance in England! Why is the man, whom the law of England would condemn to die publicly, in the face of an insulting mob, allowed, from his foreign sumptuous, but obscene retreat, to oppress and to starve annually, without restraint, without diminution of his revenues, families of his Majesty's Irish subjects, while such as his cruel oppression goads to rebellion or illegal violence, suffer the punishment, from which, by his wealth or connexions, he escapes,

——— damnatus inani

Judicio, quid enim salvis infamia nummis?

No. 17, page 10, "*might save us*,"

Not to kings, Lemuel, give not to kings wine to drink; nor to princes strong drink; lest they might drink and forget the rights, and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted.

Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts.

That they may drink and forget their poverty; and remember their misery no more. Prov. xxxi. 4, 5, 6, 7.

The church would have her disciples believe, that these words are divinely inspired: and though in these things the church is exceedingly fallible, I know of no sufficient reason to deny it. If so, it is better not to despise it.

We christians however, are allowed to think, that kings and princes, as well as other men, may use as much wine as will do them good. But that the great alone, or the great and the rich, or the great and the rich and the pious, should take all themselves, and suffer the poor to want a just share, or to perish for want of it, would be an intolerable vulgarity among Christ's disciples.

God has bid the poor to the tables of the rich, and they whom he has bid, should not be dishonoured.

The Irish poor are said to be of a lazy, idle disposition. No doubt the beggars are. But what else is to be expected, so long as they are treated like swine. Horses are well fed and trained to exercise: and they delight in exerting their strength. Let them that find fault with Irish peasants for laziness, abstain for a month from the food and the liquids, which God has given for the peculiar use of man, and then see whether their minds would be in proper tone, or their limbs fit for the service of their minds. We may have heard indeed from some, that have liked wine themselves, and perhaps never fairly tried how they could do without it, that strong liquor is not proper for man, since neither horses nor cows are seen drinking wine. But neither have these useful animals been seen to boil their corn or grass. But let their barley and their oats be kept back from horses, as they are from Irish peasants, and let strong drink be made of them for the rich, or for those who can live upon credit, and let these fine animals have nothing but potatoes and water: I suppose they would soon be as unfit for work, as the most lazy Irish beggar woman.

Are Irish sailors or soldiers remarkable for dirt, or laziness, or inactivity? They have fair treatment.

No. 18, page 10, "*from the guilt.*"

If an assassin attacks any one on the highway, and kills him or mortally wounds him, all England

is anxious for the vengeance the law awards. How can a nation which appears to itself so humane, be guilty of the inattention or forbearance, of suffering the want of law to starve the poor Irish from year to year? Are the implements of an actual assassin more certain instruments of the destruction of the victim, than long continued cold and hunger and nakedness, are, and have been for centuries, of the destruction of the poor of Ireland?

No. 19, page 10, "*first session.*"

This humble petition was written and printed at the beginning of the first session of the present Parliament, and sent in the form of a letter to British Peers and Members of Parliament.

No. 20. page 10. "*give you prosperity.*"

When some years ago, a sum equal to a very small part of the revenues that are constantly drawn from Ireland by reason of the want of law for the peasantry, was returned in the way of an eleemosynary contribution, to keep alive that peasantry, in a time of pestilence and famine greater *than ordinary*: did it not appear as if the God of nature had observed it? Were not the fields and the trees of the ensuing harvest oppressed with the weight of their produce? And did not a course of public prosperity long unprecedented, follow? But afterwards, when the legislature of a great nation had voted large sums to the priests, or to their god, for the purpose of building them temples; what reward did they get for their piety and zeal? Nothing that I know of — except a temporary check.

The true God dwells not, nor did he ever dwell, in temples made with hands. He never desired any to build churches: rather dissuading men from doing such things: he satisfies the hungry with good things, and sends the rich empty away; and bids us all do justice and love mercy.

Appendix.

A

WRITING.

HANDED up to the Magistrates of a great and rich Borough, by a little beggar child, who for the crime of asking relief for his starving mother, had been kidnapped, and put in the coal hole.

How did they kill poor Pat ? they did not cut his throat or pistol him.

No, may be they would be ashamed of that : besides they might be hanged : but they took his money and bid him go beg : and when he begs they put him in gaol, or in the small-pox ward of the poor house, and starve him. If Pat has no money he can't buy food : and if he has no food, he dies.

What do they do with all the money ? their country is very rich : yet they are poor.

Oh ! things ill gotten are as badly expended : Don't they hang the watch chains about the ladies' necks, or don't they buy gold watches for the men ; and don't they buy many a useless thing that can't be got without money ? There may be goods enough where there's no money. How could the great Russian Counts build squares,

if they were not to be paid for the houses? But as Solomon says, He that oppresseth the poor to increase his riches, and he that giveth to the rich, shall surely come to want.

But what was that quiet, inoffensive creature John Bull doing all the time, while Pat was in the pond?

John was eating the pork chops ; and did'nt seem to know, or would'nt let on.

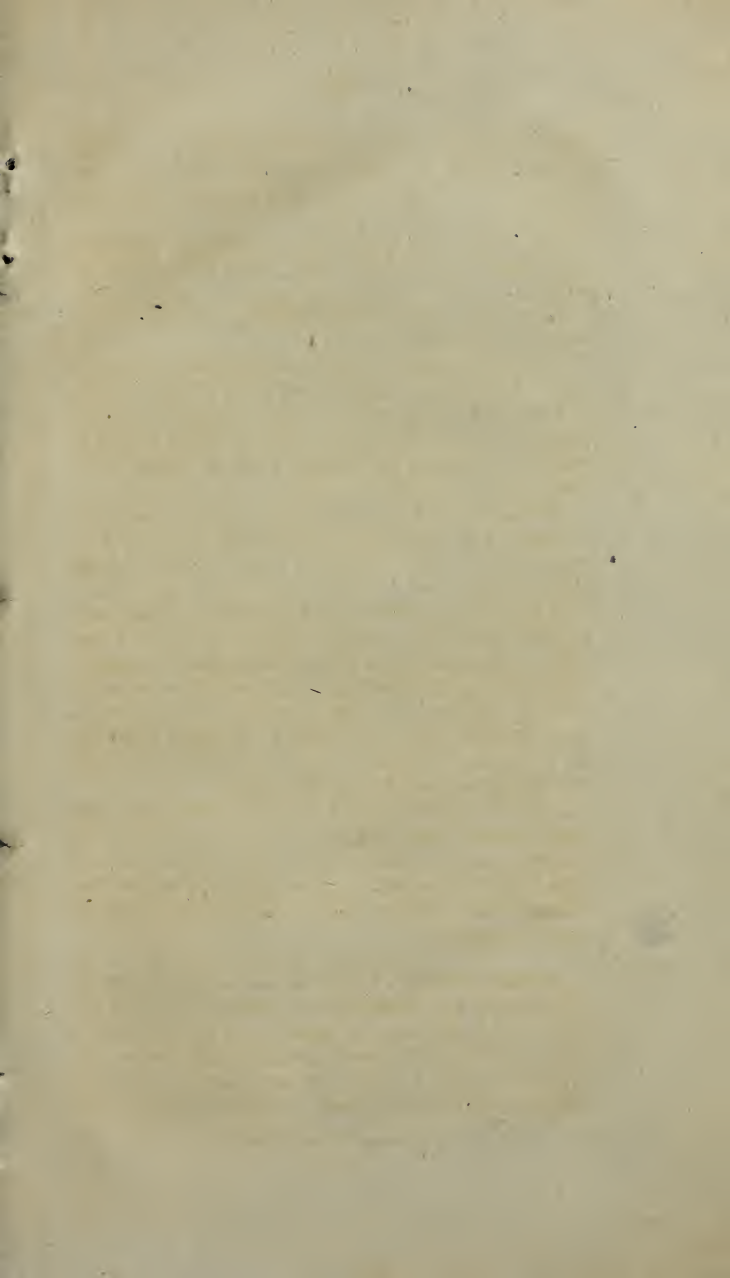
Why John seems to think himself very honest as well as generous ; and for my part, I don't like to call him a downright knave : but to speak in an odd manner on an odd subject, John it seems might as well be a rogue as an honest man on some occasions ; he is himself very rich.

He has a great deal of money coming in one way or other to be sure : but there is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing : there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches. Prov. xiii. 7. It is the blessing of the Lord that maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it. Prov. x. 22. I fear John trusts in his wits more than in God Almighty. It is quite certain that he has never properly thriven since he robbed the monasteries. He has always been in debt since that affair. He that hath pity on the poor, lendeth to the Lord ; and that which he hath given, will he pay him again.

John is very religious : he builds churches ; and gives a deal to the clergy.

And who will thank him? God never bid any man build churches, and never bid any make provision for the clergy. But he bids us all do justice and love mercy.

If thou^s forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain ; If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not ; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? and shall not he render to every man according to his works?





3 0112 062026619